

# THE GBA NEWS DOCKET

VOLUME 73, NUMBER 7; MARCH 2024



Gerald L. Walden, Jr.  
*President of the  
Greensboro Bar  
Association*

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## Message from the President

Hello GBA Members!

February was a fantastic month for the GBA. We had several remarkable events, including the recognition of Jonathan Parisi as our inaugural Outstanding Young Lawyer, the successful hosting of a highly informative 6-hour virtual CLE seminar, and an enriching tour and member meeting at the International Civil Rights Center and Museum. As for the museum tour, I have personally heard from so many of our members who thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated that experience, especially during Black History Month. It was also very heartening to learn that nearly a third of our attendees were first-time visitors to this historic museum. The GBA hopes to continue providing similar opportunities for our members in the future.

As we transition into March, which is celebrated as Women's History Month, we're thrilled to honor the amazing achievements of women in the law. Historic women lawyers in the United States shattered barriers, marking significant strides towards equality in a traditionally male-dominated field. For example, Arabella Mansfield became the first female lawyer in 1869, pioneering opportunities for future generations. Belva Lockwood, admitted to the bar in 1873, was the first woman to argue before the United States Supreme Court and run for president. Clara Shortridge Foltz was the founder of the public defender movement in the 1890s. Florence Allen was the first woman in the United States to serve as a prosecutor and be elected as a trial court judge in 1920, breaking the judicial glass ceiling. The resilience and determination of these women and so many others, paved the way for women's inclusion and success in the law.

Additionally, I want to acknowledge the remarkable women who have served as President of the GBA, starting with Doris Bray in 1990. Since then, eight other women have led this association. I eagerly anticipate the leadership of our tenth female president, Manisha Patel, once my term concludes.

Please plan to join us for our March Member meeting where we'll hear from four amazing women in the judiciary, the Sisters Who Rule. This meeting will also be a departure from our typical member meetings in that it will be virtual. However, lunch will be provided by the GBA courtesy of Chez Genese which is a woman-owned restaurant in Downtown Greensboro.

Finally, similar to February, there are several events planned in March to foster fellowship among our members. I encourage you to attend as many as possible... we'd love to see you.

Happy Women's History Month!

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Gerald L. Walden, Jr." in a cursive style.

Gerald L. Walden, Jr.

GBA President, 2023-2024

You can contribute news or topics  
of interest to the GBA by contacting  
Editor Jonathan M. Parisi:  
[jparisi@spanglerestateplanning.com](mailto:jparisi@spanglerestateplanning.com)

# MARCH CALENDAR NOTES

- March 5 YLS Read Across America,  
Hunter Elementary
- March 7 YLS Meals at Urban Ministry
- March 7 Real Property Section Meeting,  
5:30 PM, Tuggle Duggins
- March 8 YLS Philanthropy Friday  
for Hunter Elementary
- March 13 GBA Board Meeting,  
4:00 PM, Self Help Building
- March 14 NC Court of Appeals Oral Arguments  
and Joint Reception,  
4:00 PM, High Point Law
- March 20 Mix & Mingle,  
5:30 PM, SouthEnd Brewing
- March 20 April Newsletter  
Submission Deadline
- March 20 YLS Board Meeting,  
12:00 PM, CR Legal Team Office
- March 21 GBA VIRTUAL Member Meeting  
with Box Lunch Pick-up from Chez Genese  
[REGISTER HERE](#)

[Click to keep up with GBA Events Online](#)

[Click Here for Legal Community Events](#)

Connect with us!



[GBA Young Lawyers Section](#)  
[Greensboro Bar Association](#)

# NEW MEMBERS

Approved February 14, 2024

Karin Phalen  
*Kontoor Brands, Inc.*  
Endorser: Sarah H. Roane

Kristen Covington  
*Elon University School of Law*  
Endorser: Krista Contino Saumby

Abdul Kareem Omer  
*UNCG – Center for New North Carolinians*  
Endorser: Sarah H. Roane

## Wellness Corner

BarCARES is a confidential, short-term intervention program provided cost-free to members of the 24<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Bar and other participating judicial district bars, voluntary bar associations and law schools. If you would like additional information about the program and/or its availability in your area, please contact the BarCARES coordinator at 919.929.1227 or 1.800.640.0735 or click on the icon below.

BarCARES®

## NOTICE

Submissions for consideration for the Greensboro Bar Association Newsletter should be made to Jonathan M. Parisi at [jparisi@spanglerestateplanning.com](mailto:jparisi@spanglerestateplanning.com). All written submissions should be made in Word format and should be in complete and final form, and any photographs should be submitted in jpeg format. Any photographs submitted should contain a caption identifying the person or persons in the photograph and, where applicable, other information necessary to understand the context of the photograph. Submissions made in other formats, including e-mail text submissions, may not be considered for publication.



Elizabeth Robertson  
is President of the  
Greensboro Bar  
Association's Young  
Lawyers Section  
and Personal Injury  
Litigation Attorney  
at [CR Legal Team,  
LLP](#)

# Young Lawyers Section: Connections

## An Update from YLS

The month of February was exciting and busy for YLS! On Friday, February 16, 2024, YLS partnered with the Mentorship Committee to host "The Art of Mentorship" with Guest Speaker Keith Kannenberg of The Kannenberg Institute, featuring special guest Lee Rouson: a former running back in the NFL, two time Superbowl Champion with the New York Giants, and Greensboro native. Rouson shared his perspective as it relates to the importance of mentorship and Kannenberg led an interactive segment with over 20 GBA members in attendance about the art of mentorship.



## YLS Promotes First Annual YLS Service Week!

YLS invites ALL GBA MEMBERS to join us in a week of service March 5-8, 2024.

Participants are welcome to participate in the following service opportunities:

- March 5** "Read Across America Day" at Hunter Elementary School. Sign up for one hour shift(s) reading to students at Hunter Elementary School
- March 7** Cooking & serving a meal at Greensboro Urban Ministries
- March 8** Philanthropy Friday: YLS raising funds for the benefit of Hunter Elementary. To donate, scan QR Code or [Click Here](#).



To sign up for one or more of the service events above, please email [erobertson@crlegalteam.com](mailto:erobertson@crlegalteam.com) and/or [tnullmeyer@turningpointlit.com](mailto:tnullmeyer@turningpointlit.com). We look forward to serving alongside you!

## Upcoming YLS Events:

In March, YLS looks forward to YLS Service Week, March 4-8, 2024, comprised of several service events outlined above.

In April, YLS will be volunteering at Backpack Beginnings on April 11, 2024, from 2:30-4:30 PM. Please email [erobertson@crlegalteam.com](mailto:erobertson@crlegalteam.com) to sign up!

For more information about YLS events & service opportunities, follow us on [Facebook: Greensboro Bar Association's Young Lawyers Section](#).

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Camille Stell  
is President and  
CEO of Lawyers  
Mutual Consulting  
& Services. Continue  
this conversation  
by contacting  
Camille at [camille@  
lawyersmutualnc.com](mailto:camille@lawyersmutualnc.com)  
or 800.662.8843.

# GENERATIONAL TRENDS IN ASSOCIATION GROWTH

In Sarah Sladek's book, *The End of Membership as We Know It*, she says, "Technology has been a game-changer, giving people access to networks and information without the assistance of associations. Yet, the hurdle that technology poses pales in comparison to the generational shift that's about to occur in the 21st century."

"From now until 2030, every eight seconds someone will turn 65. This shift in human capital – the largest shift in our country's history – poses the greatest threat to associations because most associations remain entirely governed and supported by the Baby Boomer generation, and few have or are developing strategies to cushion themselves from this massive exodus of board members, committee chairs, and dedicated volunteers. According to BoardSource's Nonprofit Governance Index, only 2 percent of board members are under 30 years old."

"Coupled with social changes that have emerged in the last 20 years, such as work-life balance and a societal movement away from conformity towards individuality, we now have generations with dramatically different needs, values, wants, and expectations."

"Like it or not, joining an association doesn't necessarily top the next generation's list of things to do."

While Sarah's book was published in 2011, her words still ring true. And she would have had no way of knowing the impact that a world-wide pandemic would have on every aspect of life, including associations, just a decade away.

## Generational Differences

Much has been written about generational differences and Sarah's book examines those differences in association life. Baby Boomers are driven by sacrifice, loyalty, and the opportunity to serve. Boomers were seemingly made for giving of themselves to volunteer associations. And that worked well as most associations were managed by a small staff of paid employees and relied heavily on the volunteer member model.

Younger generations want to connect themselves with a cause that inspires them and have a meaningful, engaging experience. As Sarah noted, not only are we not reliant on associations to provide us with introductions, learning opportunities, and information specific to our industry, we can easily access this information and with technology enhancements since 2011, we have additionally learned to build community virtually.

However, creating associations that speak to Boomers and Millennials are not mutually exclusive options. Building an inclusive and welcoming culture within associations is key to fostering member engagement, ensuring long-term sustainability, and promoting the overall success of the organization. An inclusive culture not only attracts diverse members but also retains them by creating an environment where all individuals feel valued, respected, and connected.

## Building a Sense of Community

Associations are, at their core, communities of individuals with shared interests or goals. Fostering a sense of community is essential for member engagement. Engaged members perceive the association as a place where they belong, share common values, and can collaborate with others who understand and appreciate their perspectives. This community is a place to meet people, find solutions to their problems or to create solutions for problems outside of the association, of which there are many when viewed through the lens of those needing legal services. Community gives meaning to the association.

## Value Proposition

Members engage when they see a clear value proposition. This involves offering relevant services, resources, and opportunities that address their needs and contribute to their personal or professional development.

Associations need to continually assess and adapt their offerings to align with the evolving needs and expectations of their diverse membership base. For example, at Lawyers Mutual, we spend a great deal of time

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# ATTORNEY JONATHAN M. PARISI RECEIVES OUTSTANDING YOUNG LAWYER AWARD

During the February 2024 member meeting, the GBA bestowed upon Jonathan M. Parisi the inaugural Outstanding Young Lawyer Award. This award is bestowed upon an attorney with fewer than 10 years of practice experience who is a member in good standing of the North Carolina State Bar and an active member of both the GBA and YLS. This individual exhibits: (i) professional excellence; (ii) service to the profession and the bar; (iii) service to the community; and (iv) a reputation for advancing legal ethics, personal professionalism and professional responsibility.

Parisi holds a B.S. degree in Business Administration and Law from Western Carolina University (2016), a law degree from Elon Law (2018), and an MBA from Elon University (2020). During his time in law school, Parisi served as a clerk at Carruthers & Roth and The Carroll Companies, while also contributing to Elon Law's Small Business and Entrepreneurship Clinic.

Since 2020, Parisi has been a valued member of Spangler Estate Planning law firm, specializing in estate planning and probate matters. Despite his relatively brief four-year tenure in the legal field, Parisi has swiftly established himself as an integral figure in the Guilford County community. He has actively participated in the Young Lawyer Section (YLS) as a Board Member and demonstrated exceptional leadership within the GBA, notably chairing the Newsletter/Media Committee for approximately two years. Moreover, Parisi's speaking



Jonathan M. Parisi with GBA President Gerald L. Walden, Jr.

engagement at a GBA member meeting in Spring of 2023 showcased his remarkable abilities and marked him as one of the most junior attorneys to present before the membership.

Congratulations to Attorney Jonathan M. Parisi; his contributions have undoubtedly enriched both the GBA and YLS.

## NC MOCK TRIAL COMPETITION THRIVES

From the NC High School Mock Trial High Point Regional Coordinator team, Rich Manger, Eric Richardson, Jonathan M. Parisi and Rachel Boos:

On Saturday, February 3, 2024, twelve high school teams from across our state gathered at the Guilford County Courthouse in High Point to participate in a trial competition featuring the fictitious case of the *State of Utopia v. Fran Lewis*. Fran Lewis, an environmental activist, was charged with the murder of Rick Fanning, a vice president for Pinnacle Paper, a company believed to be responsible for polluting a local river and causing a high incidence of cancer in residents of Morse County. In the championship round of the competition, the Central Carolina Home Schoolers prevailed over Millenium

Charter Academy to win a bid to the state championship next month at Campbell Law School. Those who attended and volunteered were treated to a total of 13 trials and some amazing lawyering.

We are indebted to and extend a very special thank you to the following GBA members who gave up their Saturday and volunteered as presiding judges and scoring jurors for this event:

Adam Linett, Ames Chamberlin, Eloise Hassell, Leah Howell, Eric Medlin, Erin Reis, Jeff Smith, Kathryn Corey, Kathryn Mangus, Catherine Stalker, Kermit Robinson, Alex Snow, Camila Rivadeneira, and Karin Phalen.

# GBA REAL PROPERTY SECTION MEETING

Lawyers:

Concerned with the implications of the Odyssey system rollout across the state? With Odyssey going live in Guilford County in April, the Real Property Section's upcoming March meeting would be a great time to sit down with David Woods, chairman of the NCBA Odyssey Task Force, to have your questions answered.

Join us for drinks and dinner at 5:30pm on March 7 at the office of Tuggle Duggins (400 Bellemare Street, Suite 800). To make a reservation, please call Martha Bailey directly at 336.271.5202 or send an email to [mbailey@tuggleduggins.com](mailto:mbailey@tuggleduggins.com).

We look forward to seeing you there!

## ARE YOU READY TO MIX-N-MINGLE?

Come join the GBA at SouthEnd Brewing for an evening of fellowship! Your first drink is on us! SouthEnd has a fabulous menu, including Bavarian Pretzels, Salads, Sandwiches, and Flatbread Pizzas. We will raffle off two \$50 gift cards to SouthEnd – one entry for bringing a prospective member and another entry if you bring in a completed Membership Challenge form!

**DATE:** Wednesday, March 20, 2024

**TIME:** 5:30 to 7:30 pm

**PLACE:** SouthEnd Brewing,  
117 West Lewis Street,  
Downtown Greensboro

[Register Now!](#)

## GENERATIONAL TRENDS IN ASSOCIATION GROWTH CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

talking about “value add” for our insureds. We realize that the purchase of an insurance policy is a rather dry (and expensive!) transaction. However, once our insureds meet our people, they tend to become loyal for the life of their law practice.

For us, added value means preventative advice from claims attorneys, free consults in the areas of practice management and succession / retirement planning, as well as the opportunity to develop relationships with our employees who can be personal resources for buyers as they go about the business of buying a malpractice insurance policy, health insurance policy or title insurance policy.

### Two-Way Communication

Effective communication is a cornerstone of member engagement and therefore member growth. Associations should establish channels for open and transparent communication, making sure members are informed, they feel heard, and they are involved in decision-making processes.

Regular feedback mechanisms such as surveys, forums for discussion, and one-on-one intentional encounters with members by staff and leadership can enhance communication and help associations understand the evolving needs of their members.

## BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE AND WELCOMING CULTURE

An inclusive and welcoming culture is crucial for attracting and retaining a diverse membership. It involves intentional efforts to create an environment where every member feels respected, heard, and valued. Here are key elements to consider:

### Diversity and Representation

Actively promote diversity within the association's membership, leadership, committees, and decision-making bodies. Diverse representation at all levels sends a powerful message about the organization's commitment to inclusivity.

Celebrate and highlight the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives of your members through telling members' stories through channels such as member profiles in newsletters, at in-person events, and via social media.

Ensure that resources, events, and information are accessible to all members, regardless of their background or abilities. This may involve providing materials in multiple languages, offering accommodations for individuals with disabilities, and considering various learning preferences.

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THE GREENSBORO BAR ASSOCIATION PRESENTS

## A BENEFIT FOR LEGAL AID OF NORTH CAROLINA

Saturday, April 13, 2024  
5:00 – 7:30 PM

Boxcar Bar + Arcade  
120 W Lewis Street

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### Admission

\$60 in advance  
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# GREENSBORO UNVEILS NEW STATUE HONORING JUSTICE HENRY E. AND SHIRLEY T. FRYE

A sculpture honoring Justice Henry E. and Shirley T. Frye is now on display in Greensboro and memorializes the significant contributions by the power couple to North Carolina and the Greensboro community over the course of several decades.

Justice Frye has been a long-standing leader in many local non-profit, civic, academic, and professional organizations. After graduating from NC A&T State University, Justice Frye served our country as a member of the Air Force, with tours to Korea and Japan. After being denied the right to vote by way of the literacy test that was designed to prevent African Americans from participating in government decision-making, Justice Frye made a career change in an effort to abolish systemic racism across the state.

As a graduate of UNC School of Law, Justice Frye later became the first African-American elected to the North Carolina Supreme Court. His leadership would then propel him to serve as chief justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court in 1999.

Shirley Frye also graduated from NC A&T State University, and she has worked in various community and education positions in Greensboro for over five decades. As a former educator and assistant vice chancellor for development and university relations at A&T, Ms. Frye has committed herself to leading individuals of all ages to success. Ms. Frye retired as vice president of community relations at WFMY News 2 after winning an Emmy Ward, and she subsequently became the recipient of the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, North Carolina's highest civilian award.

The footprint toward the growth and evolvement of our community and state by the Fries is undeniably significant. The statue that pays tribute to their legacy is located at Center City Park in downtown Greensboro and shows the couple holding hands, with plaques that highlight their contributions.



## COURT OF APPEALS HOLDS ORAL ARGUMENTS IN MARCH

GBA members are invited to observe the NC Court of Appeals as they convene at High Point Law to hear oral arguments on March 14, 2024!

Two panels of appellate judges (three on each panel) will hear oral arguments in Congdon Hall. The panels will hear arguments from 2:00p.m.-4:00 pm.

A GBA/HPBA members reception honoring the judges will be held from 4:00p.m. to 6:00p.m. Free parking is available in a parking deck right next to Congdon Hall.

RSVPs for the oral arguments should be made [here](#).



### MICHAEL ANDREW SCHLOSSER

May 1, 1945 – February 6, 2024

Michael Andrew Schlosser died on February 6, 2024, at Pennybyrn. Mike Schlosser was born in Greensboro on May 1, 1945, the son of the late Rachel Wyrick Schlosser and William J. Schlosser. Mike graduated from Greensboro Senior High School (now Grimsley Senior High School) in 1963 and from The Virginia Military Institute in 1967. He was commissioned as a First Lieutenant in the United States Army Paratrooper Corps, and served a tour of duty in South Vietnam during the Vietnam conflict. Decades later, in 2014, he was diagnosed with multiple myeloma and amyloidosis as a result of his exposure to Agent Orange.

When he returned from Vietnam, Mike taught and coached junior high school football at Hargrave Military Academy in Chatham, Virginia. Hargrave had a record of 0-60 for the six previous seasons, but Coach Schlosser led the team to a 1-9 record during his first and only season at the helm. He decided it might be better to exit the coaching ranks and go to law school.

Mike graduated from Wake Forest University School of Law in 1974 and went to work as an Assistant District Attorney in Guilford County. He served in that role for five years, before resigning to run for and being elected District Attorney for Guilford County in 1978.

District Attorney Schlosser would want to be remembered for having strong support from law enforcement and for an even-handed approach to prosecutions. He took to heart his oath to have the criminal laws fairly and impartially administered and always aimed to uphold the integrity of the courts.

Mike was proud of the prosecutors he led in the District Attorney's office. Alumni from his staff include two District Court judges, a North Carolina Superior Court judge, a Clerk of Superior Court, a District Attorney, a Senior Deputy Attorney General for the State of North Carolina and Director of the State Bureau of Investigation, and a United States District Attorney and justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court.

Toward the end of Mike's term as District Attorney, he was introduced to UNCG graduate student Rebecca Heafner, whom he called "the finest girl in the Carolinas." Mike and Rebecca were married a year later at Jackson Memorial Hall on the campus of VMI, with Mike's son Drew serving as ring bearer.

Mike's private law practice flourished, and Rebecca became active in the community. Their son David was born in 1985, bringing enormous life and spirit to the family; his unexpected death at age 25 brought unspeakable heartache.

Mike served his community early on as an advisor for the Young Lawyers Explorer Post sponsored by the Greensboro Bar Association. He was a founding member of the Guilford College Rotary Club and served on the boards of the Greensboro Mental Health Association, Family Service of the Piedmont, and the Association of Retarded Citizens.

Mike was preceded in death by his parents, his brother William "Billy" Schlosser, Jr., his sister Linda Schlosser Tasker, and his son David. He is survived by his wife Rebecca; his son Michael Andrew "Drew" Schlosser, Jr. and his wife Angelique and their sons Andrew, Hudson and Knox, all of Southlake, Texas. Mike's grandsons called him "Gee" and Gee enjoyed reading Greek mythology to them whenever they gathered. Mike is also survived by his brother James E. Schlosser and his wife Sharon of Greensboro.

# MINDFUL TIPS FOR LAWYERS FROM SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE PATRICE A. HINNANT (RET.)

This Bar Year, President Walden has extended invitations to several seasoned members of the GBA to offer words of advice to their colleagues at every Member Meeting. During the February meeting, attendees were honored to receive insights from Retired Superior Court Judge Patrice A. Hinnant. Responding to requests from numerous attendees who either sought copies of her remarks thereafter or were unable to hear them due to technical difficulties with the microphone, Judge Hinnant has graciously provided the following in her own words.

*Accepting the challenge of the invitation to present tips to an audience of lawyers is most daunting. Please know I hope the best for each of you and want to thank you for your service as Fellows of the Bar.*

Here are a few tips shared at the meeting:

- Let professionalism be your polar star, your compass for doing your best, and for doing what is right.
- Take care in how you treat people. Avoid weaponizing Rule 11, complaints, and appeals.
- Being a good advocate does not mean being disrespectful, nor winning at all costs. Always strive to do your best so you can live with the outcome without blame or shame.
- Strive to be kind and to keep your mind clear and alert. Learn to manage your stress with faith, exercise, and recreation. Fall in love. Reboot yourself. Live your life.
- Whenever overwhelmed or befuddled, ask for help, even just 'getting out of the doghouse' if your mouth got ahead of your senses.
- Reflect on why you chose the profession and the path you are on. Decide whether it is time to 'change horses' for more rewarding work, more lucrative opportunities, or a better life balance.
- Consider if it is time to walk away. The longer you stay, the less creative you can become where you feel 'stuck.'
- Do not let fear nor shame prevent you from doing what is best for your life, your dreams, your purpose, even if you need someone to help you to think so you can work things out for yourself. No one else is supposed to understand your calling. It was not a conference call.
- Be nice to judges. They listen to 'mess' all day, every day. Though they signed up for the job of resolving disputes and administering justice, they did not sign up to be bullied, demeaned, stalked or harassed. Keep your hands off them.
- Be nice to people; walk gently in the lives of others. Not all wounds are visible. You are. God sees how you treat others and so do cameras.
- Be patient with yourself and others. It takes effort to be present. You know what you had to conquer, shed, or organize.
- Rethink where you have 'hung your shingle.' Shift your site if you are not at peace. Explore rural North Carolina where towns have few, hear me, few lawyers. There is a dire need for family, criminal, elder care, disability (especially for children) and estate lawyers.
- Prepare for a safe landing. It is never too late to invest in your future; the magic of compounding is especially rewarding.
- Take care of your body – it will stop working for you if you do not. Take care of your heart – it will cause you immeasurable unrest if you do not protect it; be mindful of what your eyes and ears feed it. Take care of your mind – it will leave you and your 'stinky mess' to make it on your own.
- Use precious time squandered on social media scrolling and unnecessary activity to be better at your tasks.
- May you, with earnest endeavor, seek to find and to fulfill the purpose of your life. Too, strive to fulfill the purpose of the profession, strive to better shape the profession and the justice system towards the goals of liberty and justice. Our preeminence depends on how we use our power and our resources. Use your moral and intellectual treasure to do the job! You have all that you need.

## YOUNG LAWYERS SECTION: CONNECTIONS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3



Hillary Kies

### YLS Board Member Spotlight: Hillary Kies

Hillary Kies practices Civil Litigation at Turning Point Litigation here in Greensboro. Hillary's favorite part about her job is that she's always learning something new due to the varied nature of her practice. When asked about her involvement in GBA and YLS she stated: "I

became involved in YLS as soon as I came to Greensboro to get to know other lawyers in town. After a few years I joined the Board to help other lawyers make those same type of connections. I am also a chair of the GBA Mentorship Committee that connects lawyers of different experience levels."

For more information about Hillary and her firm, visit <https://www.turningpointlit.com/team/hillary-m-kies/>

### Connect with YLS:

To provide feedback & suggestions for future events/programming, please email the Young Lawyers Section at [info@greensboroyls.org](mailto:info@greensboroyls.org).

The Young Lawyers Section would like to celebrate the personal milestones and professional accomplishments of its members. Email YLS at [info@greensboroyls.org](mailto:info@greensboroyls.org) to share achievements that you would like celebrated on the [YLS Facebook page](#).

Provide training sessions and educational resources that promote awareness and understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) issues. This helps members develop cultural competence and fosters a more inclusive environment.

Review and revise association policies to ensure they are inclusive and do not inadvertently create barriers for any members. This includes membership criteria, event participation requirements, and any other rules that may impact inclusivity.

Implement inclusive practices in all aspects of association operations, from recruitment and onboarding to event planning and communication strategies.

## STRATEGIES FOR CULTIVATING A WELCOMING ATMOSPHERE

Creating a welcoming atmosphere involves intentional efforts and ongoing initiatives. Here are a few strategies to cultivate a sense of belonging and inclusivity.

### Onboarding and Orientation

We often think of onboarding and orientation as exercises for new employees rather than new association members. However, developing an onboarding process that introduces new members to the association's culture, values, and available resources can make a difference in member engagement and retention.

Assign mentors or buddy systems to help newcomers navigate the association and establish connections with existing members. Create a "new member" section on the website. Focus on a member benefits in each issue of the newsletter.

### Networking Opportunities

Networking isn't just a benefit of association membership; it is the primary reason members join associations. Facilitate networking events and platforms that encourage members to connect with one another. This could include virtual or in-person events, online forums, or special interest groups based on shared characteristics or goals.

Actively promote inclusivity during networking events by implementing icebreakers, ensuring diverse representation in panel discussions, and creating an atmosphere that is open and welcoming to all.

### Collaborative Decision-making

Involve members in decision-making processes, seeking their input on important matters affecting the association. Establish diverse committees and working groups to tackle specific issues, ensuring that a variety of perspectives are considered in the decision-making process.

### Continuous Feedback

Implement regular feedback mechanisms to gauge member satisfaction and identify areas for improvement. This could involve surveys, focus groups, or town hall meetings.

Act upon the feedback received, demonstrating the association's commitment to responsiveness and member-driven initiatives.

### Educational Programing

Offer educational programs that address relevant topics, providing members with the knowledge and tools to contribute to a more inclusive culture, in addition to the normal course of continued educational opportunities concerning legal skills.

### Clear Communication

Ensure that communication is clear, consistent, and accessible to all members. Use inclusive language and imagery in promotional materials, newsletters, and other communication channels.

Establish guidelines for respectful and inclusive communication, emphasizing the importance of creating a positive and supportive environment.

### Conclusion

Member engagement and the creation of an inclusive and welcoming culture are intertwined aspects that contribute to the success and vibrancy of associations. By prioritizing diversity, equity, and inclusion, and implementing strategies to actively engage members, associations can build a sense of community where individuals feel valued, connected, and inspired to contribute to the collective goals of the organization. Through continuous efforts and a commitment to fostering an inclusive culture, associations can create a lasting impact that resonates with current and future members, ensuring the sustained growth and relevance of the association in the years to come.

*Camille Stell is the President of Lawyers Mutual Consulting & Services and the co-author of "RESPECT – An Insight to Attorney Compensation Plans" published in December 2022. Continue this conversation by contacting Camille at [camille@lawyersmutualconsulting.com](mailto:camille@lawyersmutualconsulting.com) or 919.677.8900*